

FATALITY



AFZF-GA-SAFE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY HEADQUARTERS III CORPS AND FORT HOOD FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5056



17 September 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: POV Fatalities Continue to Climb -- Fatality Memo # 02-20

1. An automobile crash over the past weekend broke our sixty-eight day string of not experiencing a POV fatality within III Corps. It occurred at Ft. Hood. The NCO behind the wheel was speeding during the early Sunday morning hours, lost control of the vehicle, crossed the highway median, and rolled his POV four to five times. His body was thrown from the vehicle, indicating that he was not wearing his seat belts. The combined forces of the excessive speed and the rollover impact caused the sergeant's body to be thrown 100 feet from where the wreckage came to a rest. The soldier was taken to the post hospital where he died less than an hour later due to massive head injuries. This latest POV fatality now totals ten deaths for Fort Hood and a total of seventeen for all of III Corps who have died in POV accidents in FY 02. We are five POV fatalities behind the 22 fatalities that we experienced throughout the Corps last fiscal year, with two weeks to go in FY02. I hope the string of FY02 deaths ends here. Of course, hope is not a method.

2. We had been headed in the right direction for over two months until this crash and death occurred. At the Fort Hood gates where we have POV safety signs/displays, we have set our "Number of Days Since Last POV Fatality" counter back to zero and changed the green flashing lights to red. Except for sympathizing with family and friends of the deceased, and gleaned lessons learned from this unfortunate death last weekend, we should not look back. We must look forward and do all the right things that ensure another long POV fatality-free period. This is where I need commanders and leaders to step a little closer to the plate and become totally engaged in POV crash prevention to ensure their soldiers' safety.

3. The disturbing fact about last weekend's fatality is that it involved a non-commissioned officer and he was apparently violating several important safety standards and rules. With his help, his planets were lined up. For one, he was speeding, and two; he apparently did not wear his seat belts. He may have been fatigued too, since this happened in the early morning hours. Common knowledge tells us that the most common POV accident/injury factors are speed, fatigue, not wearing seat belts, and alcohol. In this fatal incident last weekend, two, and probably three of these common factors were present.

4. Charge your leaders to continuously scrutinize/assess existing POV programs to see what improvements/upgrades are needed to ensure safety of their troops. Take a planet or two out of alignment. Have your leaders use the Next Accident Assessment of Individuals in "The Toolbox" (available in the G1 SAFETY public folder and on the Army Safety Center website). Considering that 80% of the POV fatalities throughout the Corps in FY01/02 were Specialists and below, your leaders have a target-rich accident environment to turn around. We need 100% commitment from every individual, leader, and commander to stop the unnecessary POV fatality carnage.

ENSURE WIDEST DISSEMINATION AND POST ON BULLETIN BOARDS.

B. B. BELL
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

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